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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.38/Rev.1 and Add.1)*]

55/163. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, which contains in its annex the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, and its resolutions 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and 54/219 and 54/233 of 22 December 1999, and recalling agreed conclusions 1999/1 of the Economic and Social Council[1] and Council resolution 1999/63 of 30 July 1999,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,[2]

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory, and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters,

Emphasizing further, in this regard, the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected State in dealing with natural disasters in all its phases,

Stressing the need to optimize and disseminate the listings of organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant humanitarian and scientific organizations, as well as the need to develop further a directory of the specialized national, regional and international institutions and agencies working in the field of international response to natural disasters, together with an inventory of national

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3/Rev.1), chap. VI, para. 5.
[2] A/55/82-E/2000/61.

capacities, in order to lay the foundation for an efficient and effective use of resources available and collaborative efforts,

Noting the establishment of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination among all relevant bodies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, in dealing with all phases of natural disasters,

1. *Expresses deep concern* at the increasing number and scale of natural disasters, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disaster;

2. *Stresses* that humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 and should be determined on the basis of the human dimension and needs arising out of the particular natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, inter alia, by disaster prevention, including building regulations and appropriate land use, as well as disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response, and requests the international community in this context to continue to assist developing countries, where appropriate;

4. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the provision of humanitarian assistance for all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including through the provision of adequate resources;

5. *Recognizes* that economic growth and sustainable development contribute to improving the capacity of States to mitigate, respond to and prepare for natural disasters;

6. *Stresses* the need to strengthen efforts at all levels, including at the domestic level, to improve natural disaster awareness, prevention, preparedness and mitigation, including early warning systems, as well as international cooperation in response to emergencies, from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, bearing in mind the overall negative impact of natural disasters, the resulting humanitarian need and requests from affected countries, as appropriate;

7. *Recognizes* efforts by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other members of the United Nations system in promoting preparedness for response at the national, regional and international levels and in strengthening the mobilization and coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system in the field of natural disasters, and in this context welcomes the expansion of the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams to include experts from all areas of the world;

8. *Notes* that the transition phase after natural disasters is often excessively long and characterized by a number of gaps and that Governments, in cooperation with relief agencies, as appropriate, when planning for meeting immediate needs, should place these needs in the perspective of sustainable development whenever such an approach is possible, and in this context takes note of the work of the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams;

9. *Encourages* enhanced cooperation among Governments, in particular through the United Nations and regional organizations, in order to strengthen early warning and preparedness mechanisms for natural disasters;

10. *Encourages* Governments, in particular through their disaster management or response agencies, as appropriate, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, to continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to maximize the effectiveness of the international response to natural disasters, based, inter alia, on humanitarian need, from relief to development, and also to maximize the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts at all levels;

11. *Encourages* further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of those organizations to respond to natural disasters;

12. *Encourages* States that have not signed or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998,[3] to consider doing so;

13. *Stresses* the need for partnership among Governments of the affected countries, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training in, access to and use of technologies to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters and to enhance the transfer of current technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed;

14. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

15. *Also encourages* in such operations the sharing of geographical data, including remotely sensed images and geographic information system and global positioning system data among Governments, space agencies and relevant international humanitarian organizations, as appropriate, and also notes in this context the work being done by the Global Disaster Information Network;

16. *Further encourages* compatibility and complementarity of telecommunications and other technological equipment required in humanitarian and disaster relief operations;

17. *Stresses* the need to ensure close links, as set out in resolution 54/219, between disaster prevention activities and the improvement of natural disaster preparedness and response;

18. *Encourages* Governments in natural-disaster-prone countries to establish, with the support of the international community, in particular the donors, national spatial information infrastructures relating to natural disaster preparedness, early warning, response and mitigation, including the necessary training of personnel;

19. *Also encourages* innovative efforts that link various phases of international assistance, from relief to development, such as the joint Disaster

[3] United Nations Treaty registration No. 27688.

Response and Recovery Mission undertaken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization in all countries affected by hurricane Mitch, and reiterates the need to ensure adequate assessment of and follow-up to these approaches, with a view to further developing and applying them, as appropriate, in other natural disasters;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant bodies of the United Nations system, to prepare recommendations on how to improve the potential of the United Nations to mitigate natural disasters including, in particular, through the development of an inventory of the existing capacities at the national, regional and international levels;

21. *Notes* the submission by the Secretary-General of his note on enhancing the functioning and utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund,[4] pursuant to the request contained in resolutions 54/95 of 8 December 1999 and 54/233 for concrete proposals for enhancing the functioning and utilization of the Fund and the invitation to consider more active use of the Fund for timely and adequate natural disaster response, and decides to consider the note comprehensively at its fifty-sixth session;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to consider innovative mechanisms to improve the international response to natural disasters, inter alia, by addressing any geographical and sectoral imbalances in such a response where they exist, as well as more effective use of national emergency response agencies, taking into account their comparative advantages and specializations, as well as existing arrangements, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session under the item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", with a view, inter alia, to contributing towards the comprehensive report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, to be submitted to the Assembly at that session under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

85th plenary meeting
14 December 2000

[4] A/55/649.